

Message Text

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43

ACTION AF-07

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FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1049

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUSAKA 2549

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, PINT, RH

SUBJECT: EMBASSY COMMENTS ON RHODESIAN CEASE-FIRE

REF: STATE 271985; LUSAKA 2545

1. BECAUSE OF CONTINUING TIGHT SECURITY ON LUSAKA TALKS OUR NORMAL CONTACTS BOTH IN GRZ AND IN LIBERATION MOVEMENTS HAVE NOT BEEN AVAILABLE TO US THIS WEEK SO THAT OUR INITIAL COMMENTS ON SMITH STATEMENT HAVE TO BE BASED PRIMARILY UPON SECONDARY SOURCES AND ON PRESS ACCOUNTS. IN NEXT FEW DAYS WE EXPECT BE ABLE TO GET BETTER FIRST-HAND INFORMATION FROM WHICH WE CAN PIECE TOGETHER MORE PRECISELY JUST WHAT HAPPENED TO BRING ABOUT DRAMATIC CHANGE IN SMITH'S POSITION BETWEEN DEC 7 AND DEC 11. FIRST GRZ CONTACT WITH UK HICOM DEC 11 REPORTED IN SEPTEL.

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2. IT IS NOW CLEAR THAT IAN SMITH'S DEC 7 PRESS CONFERENCE STATEMENT REJECTING "IMMEDIATE MAJORITY RULE" AS PRECONDITION FOR CONSTITUTIONAL TALKS DID NOT IN FACT MEAN THAT CONTACTS BETWEEN TWO SIDES WERE IRRETRIEVABLY BROKEN OFF. SMITH HIMSELF ACKNOWLEDGED THIS LAST NIGHT WHEN HE SAID THAT "THE EXCHANGES HAVE CONTINUED THIS WEEK AND THE DIFFICULTIES (THAT HAD ARISEN) HAVE NOW BEEN RESOLVED." FACT THAT THESE CONTACTS WERE CONTINUING MAY HAVE UNDERLAID PRESIDENT KAUNDA'S EXTREME SENSITIVITY ABOUT LEAKS TO PRESS EXHIBITED IN HIS NAKATINDI HALL SPEECH MONDAY NIGHT (LUSAKA 2541). RESTRAINED GRZ PUBLIC REACTION TO SMITH'S DEC 7 STATEMENT AND CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM ABOUT FUTURE RESUMPTION OF TALKS THAT CHARACTERIZED ZAMBIAN PRESS PLAY ON SUBJECT ALSO SUGGESTED THAT IMPASSE THAT HAD ARISEN WAS REGARDED HERE AS NEGOTIABLE ONE.

3. DETAILS OF HOW IMPASSE WAS RESOLVED ARE CONTAINED IN CAPE TOWN'S 873 EXDIS MESSAGE TO WHICH WE HAVE NOTHING TO ADD AT THIS POINT. WHAT IS NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR IS WHETHER "IMMEDIATE MAJORITY RULE" WAS IN FACT STICKING POINT INITIALLY; WHETHER IT WAS QUESTION OF MAJORITY RULE PER SE, OR WHETHER IT WAS QUESTION OF IMMEDIATE AGREEMENT ON MAJORITY RULE. AS REPORTED LUSAKA 2542, WORD "IMMEDIATE" WAS ALLEGEDLY NOT USED BY AFRICAN SIDE BUT THAT RHODESIAN REPRESENTATIVE HAD REACTED ADVERSELY TO ANY MENTION OF MAJORITY RULE. IT IS OF COURSE QUITE POSSIBLE THAT LIBERATION MOVEMENTS ARE CIRCULATING STORY (SEE LONDON'S 16123) THAT THEIR INITIAL POSITION HAD BEEN "MISUNDERSTOOD" BY RHODESIANS IN ORDER TO COVER UP THEIR BACKING AWAY FROM DEMAND FOR IMMEDIATE MAJORITY RULE FOLLOWING PRESSURE ON THEM BY KAUNDA TO DO SO.

4. TRADE OFF BETWEEN AGREEMENT TO RELEASE
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IMMEDIATELY AFRICAN POLITICAL DETAINEES IN RETURN FOR CEASE-FIRE PLEDGE WAS LOGICAL AND NOT UNEXPECTED. RADIO SALISBURY AT 1600 HOURS TODAY ANNOUNCED THAT BISHOP MUZOREWA, ON HIS RETURN TO SALISBURY, HAD ISSUED CORROBORATING STATEMENT THAT CEASE-FIRE WILL GO INTO EFFECT AS SOON AS DATE HAS BEEN FIXED FOR NEGOTIATIONS WITH

RHODESIAN AND UK GOVTS. SOME RHODESIAN WHITES, NOTABLY UNITED CONSERVATIVE PARTY'S WILLIAN HARPER, HAVE ALREADY ATTACKED THIS AGREEMENT AS "GHASTLY CONCESSION," ARGUING THAT SMITH'S ASSERTION LAW AND ORDER CAN BE MAINTAINED IS VALUELESS. IT ALSO IS NOTEWORTHY THAT AS LATE AS ONE HOUR BEFORE SMITH ANNOUNCEMENT LAST NIGHT SALISBURY RADIO WAS STILL BROADCASTING CASUALTY FIGURES OF FREEDOM FIGHTERS AND RHODESIAN SECURITY PERSONNEL. THERE WILL, AS SMITH PRE-DICTED IN HIS SPEECH, BE SOME TIME BEFORE CEASE-FIRE BECOMES FULLY EFFECTIVE. IN MEANTIME INCIDENTS COULD OCCUR THAT WOULD INFLAME PASSIONS ON BOTH SIDES AND IMPAIR ATMOSPHERE FOR SMOOTH FORWARD PROGRESS IN TALKS.

5. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHAT PRECISELY SMITH MEANT BY ASSURANCE THAT RELEASED AFRICAN LEADERS AND THEIR FOLLOWERS "WILL BE PERMITTED TO ENGAGE IN NORMAL ACTIVITIES IN TERMS OF THE LAW APPLICABLE TO ALL RHODESIANS." WE HAD HEARD THAT ONE OF BASES ON WHICH LIBERATION MOVEMENTS WERE PREPARED TO TALK WITH SMITH WAS REVOCATION OF EMERGENCY ACT AND OTHER LAWS THAT RESTRICT THEIR POLITICAL ACTIVITIES. REVOCATION OF THESE LAWS MAY BE ONE OF ISSUES LEFT FOR FURTHER NEGOTIATION.

IF, ON OTHER HAND, SMITH'S NOTION OF MAINTENANCE OF LAW AND ORDER DURING PERIOD AHEAD INCLUDED CONTINUED FIRM APPLICATION OF RESTRICTIONS ON AFRICAN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES, THEN HE WILL HAVE STEEP UPHILL BATTLE CONVINCING AFRICANS OF HIS GOOD INTENTIONS.

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6. SMITH DOES NOT UNDERESTIMATE DIFFICULTIES HE SEES IN ACHIEVING POLITICAL SETTLEMENT IN RHODESIA. THIS COMES THROUGH CLEARLY NOT ONLY IN HIS CONCLUDING STATEMENT THAT MAJOR TASK STILL LIES AHEAD WITH MANY COMPLEX PROBLEMS TO TAX ABILITY, PATIENCE, AND STRENGTH OF RHODESIANS BUT ALSO IN HIS WARNINGS THAT AGREEMENT TO END TERRORISM MAY TAKE SOME TIME TO BECOME EFFECTIVE AND THAT SECURITY OF COMMERCIAL INFORMATION MUST STILL BE CAREFULLY PROTECTED AS UN SANCTIONS WILL CONTINUE. WE AGREE THAT FROM SMITH'S POINT OF VIEW THIS NOTE OF CAUTION PROBABLY JUSTIFIED. WHILE THERE MAY BE SOME FLEXIBILITY IN AFRICAN POSITION ON A TIME-

TABLE FOR ACHIEVEMENT OF MAJORITY RULE, THERE IS CERTAIN TO BE SIZEABLE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AFRICAN AND WHITE UNDERSTANDINGS OF WHAT IS MEANT BY "GRADUAL" PROGRESS.

6. LARGE THROG OF RHODESIANS AND ZAMBIANS ASSEMBLED AT LUSAKA AIRPORT THIS MORNING TO JOIN KK AND OTHER SENIOR GRZ OFFICIALS IN SEEING NKOMO, SITHOLE, MUZOREWA, AND MEMBERS OF THEIR DELEGATIONS OFF FOR SALISBURY ABOARD ZAMBIAN AIR FORCE PLANE. PRESIDENTIAL ASSISTANT MARK CHONA ALSO ABOARD AIRCRAFT. WHILE MOOD OF CROWD WAS EMOTIONAL AND EVEN JUBILANT, BLACK RHODESIANS WITH WHOM WE ABLE TO SPEAK RECOGNIZED TOO THAT THIS IS ONLY BEGINNING, NOT THE END, OF WHAT MAY BE LONG AND DIFFICULT PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE. IT IS NOT IMPOSSIBLE THAT SMITH MAY BE COUNTING UPON UNITY OF AFRICAN SIDE TO DISINTEGRATE OR UPON AFRICAN PATIENCE TO BREAK, FOLLOWED BY RETURN TO ARMED STRUGGLE THAT WOULD GIVE SMITH JUSTIFICATION ONCE AGAIN TO APPEAL TO SOUTH AFRICA FOR TROOPS AND ASSISTANCE. CONTINUED UNITY OF ANC EXECUTIVE AND ESPECIALLY ITS RECEPTIVITY TO MODERATING INFLUENCES FROM KAUNDA (WHO OF ALL AFRICAN LEADERS APPEARS TO HAVE HIS PRESTIGE MOST DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN SUCCESS OF THIS INITIATIVE)
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MAY BE DECISIVE FACTORS IN ACHIEVING FAVORABLE OUTCOME.
WILKOWSKI

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